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ABSTRACT

Organized around the theme of influencing public opinion, this booklet provides teachers and lawyers with classroom materials for elementary grades K-3 (Level A), intermediate grades 4-6 (Level B), middle school grades 6-8 (Level C), and high school grades 9-12 (Level D). In addition, each level contains pages for the lawyer (marked by the scales of justice), the teacher (an apple), and the student (a pencil). The booklet contains lesson plans, activities, a public opinion poll, and an evaluation form for use by lawyers implementing the materials. The lessons and activities ask students to investigate the meaning of public policy, how public policy is shaped in the United States and their communities, and the various ways they might influence public policy. The inside front cover provides tips for lawyers preparing classroom presentations. (TSV)

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Influencing Public Policy

SO 026 782

LAWYERS HELPING
YOUNG PEOPLE
BECOME GOOD CITIZENS

ABA

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It's about citizenship and you.

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When You're a Lawyer in the Classroom . . .

You may find the following tips helpful, especially if you're a novice at giving classroom presentations:

- Work with the teacher before your session. Let her or him know what you plan to do and provide background materials. Ask what the class has been studying, and integrate your session with classroom studies.

- The first few minutes of a presentation may make or break it. Get the students involved immediately—either with a startling statement that grabs their attention or a question that they can't help but want to answer.

- Talk with the students, not at them. A lecture may work for a professor in a law class, but it is not the best way to approach elementary or even secondary students.

- Work the room. Don't stand in one place; move around. Get the students involved. Encourage participation by your own enthusiasm for the topic.

- Be prepared to vary from your lesson plan a bit. When you do generate interest and enthusiasm in the students, their questions and comments may lead you away from your plan. Encourage students' input and allow digression, but look for an opening to get back on track as soon as you can.

- Talk to the students in language they can understand, but don't feel you need to talk down to them. Use some jargon, but explain what each term means. And use examples from students' experiences and analogies they can relate to.

- Know your subject. But if asked a question that you cannot answer, don't try to hide the fact from the students. Say, "That's a good question. I don't know the answer to it."

- Be in control of the classroom. Some students may try to test you. If that happens, the teacher may intervene; then again, he or she may not. Try to handle the situation yourself. Let the students know you are in control of the classroom for the time you are there.

- Don't get involved in discussion of a school controversy, especially one that pits students against the administration. Stress responsibility as well as rights when talking about the law.

- Watch the clock. No matter how interesting you may be, most students' attention will still last no longer than the normal classroom period.

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How to Use This Booklet

This booklet contains lesson plans and ancillary materials on the topic of Influencing Public Policy for four different levels of students: elementary grades K–3 (Level A), intermediate grades 4–6 (Level B), middle school grades 6–8 (Level C), and high school grades 9–12 (Level D). The grade level is identified near the page number. In addition, each grade level contains pages for the lawyer (marked by the scales of justice), the teacher (an apple), and the students (a pencil). At the beginning of each level, you'll find a chart of the materials it comprises, along with photocopying instructions. You might also want to make overhead transparencies of the main activity pages (marked by all three icons).

I'M THE PEOPLE

Influencing Public Policy

Level A (Grades K–3)

This level contains the following materials:

Lawyer's Pages

Before your visit, call or meet with the teacher to choose the activities that fit the instructional objectives and are best suited to the group. Remember to ask the teacher what has already been covered in the class. Together, decide which units you will present and when. Review the materials for your lessons and make copies as indicated.

- ❑ **Lesson Plan** (pages A-4–5)
- ❑ **Making a Classroom Policy** (page A-6)
- ❑ **Making Public Policy** (page A-7)
- ❑ **Lawyer's Evaluation Form** (page 41)

Teacher's Pages

Make one copy of each page marked with the teacher's icon and send to the teacher in a Teacher's Packet one week before the class session.

- ❑ **Making a Classroom Policy** (page A-6)
- ❑ **Making Public Policy** (page A-7)
- ❑ **Activity Guide** (page A-8)
  Overview of the Lesson
  Activity Sheet/Answer Keys
  Extension Activities (A Classroom Policy, Public Policy Makers, Policy in Books)
- ❑ **Bibliography** (page 37)
- ❑ **Law-Related Education Essentials Matrix** (page 42)

Student's Pages

Make copies of the pages marked with the student icon for each student in class and distribute as part of a Student Packet.

- ❑ **Making a Classroom Policy** (page A-6)
- ❑ **Making Public Policy** (page A-7)
- ❑ **Activity Sheet** (page A-9)

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Objectives

During your session, students will—

- ✓ define and identify a policy
- ✓ learn how policies are related to laws and rules
- ✓ identify some important ideas to be considered when making policies
- ✓ recognize that government is involved in making public policies
- ✓ recognize that citizens have a role in making public policy

Vocabulary

As these terms come up in discussion, list them on the board and elicit definitions from students. Help them define the terms if necessary. Some of these terms appear on the Activity Sheet in the Student Packet, which students may complete after your visit.

authority
citizens
government
policy
policy maker
public policy

Lesson Overview

This lesson involves students in analyzing a classroom policy to help them define and clarify the idea of *policy*. The school is used as the focus for understanding why policies are needed and who makes policies. School policies are then compared to government policies, and students learn what makes a policy and what makes a public policy. They also role-play policy makers, both government officials and citizens, to find out how policies are used to address issues.

Unit One—What Is a Policy?

Time Needed: 1 class period
Materials Needed: chalkboard, chalk, Making a Classroom Policy Handout

Procedure

1. Introduce yourself to the students. Then tell them that you have heard about a school where there are questions about whether students can pass out birthday invitations at school. Emphasize that there are no rules at this school about passing out birthday invitations, and therefore it is up to each classroom to make its own policy. Explain that a *policy* is a plan or way of doing things. Tell students that they are going to help one teacher, Ms. Sanchez, and her students decide on a policy for their class. Point out that the only school rule that they have to guide them in making this policy is one that states, "All students must be treated equally." Ms. Sanchez is concerned that if invitations are passed out at school and some children are not invited, they will have their feelings hurt. She wonders, "Does this mean those students are not being treated equally, as the school rule requires?"

2. Remind students that a policy is a way of doing things, and write the word and the definition on the board. Ask the class to think about what might be a good way of handling the birthday invitation situation. Have students brainstorm and discuss ideas for good policies. Then explain that Ms. Sanchez and her students thought of one possible policy for their classroom. Read the information on the "Making a Classroom Policy" handout aloud to younger students. Distribute copies of the handout and read the information together with older students. Point out that some of Ms. Sanchez's students liked the policy and some did not. Encourage students to give their opinions both about the proposed policy and about Ms. Sanchez's students' reactions. Can students think of any other reasons why the policy is a good one or not? If so, they can add those reasons to the handout. Students may wish to vote on this policy, or they might want to develop a policy of their own to vote on.

3. Point out that sometimes people or groups have to make a decision about how things should be done when there is not a rule that tells them what to do in a special situation, so they make a policy. Review the situation: At Ms. Sanchez's school, teachers had a rule that told them they must treat students equally. The rules didn't say anything about passing out birthday invitations. Each teacher and his or her students had to make a policy on whether or not it was acceptable to pass out birthday invitations in their classroom.

Unit Two—More About Policies

Time Needed: 1 class period
Materials Needed: chalkboard, chalk

Procedure

1. Ask students who makes, applies, and enforces the laws at school (the principals, teachers, aides). Explain that these people get the authority to make rules because of the jobs they have. Explain that *authority* is the legitimate, or lawful, use of power. For example, the school principal has authority from his or her job. You may wish to ask the principal to visit the class to discuss school policies, how they are established, and who has input in policy making.

After the visit, ask students to think of as many school policies as they can and list them on the board. Situations that may have policies include

- Use of the playground equipment
- Behavior while standing in lines
- Behavior in the cafeteria
- Use of the library, including checking out and returning books
- Behavior in the classroom
- Use of the pencil sharpener or other classroom equipment

Have students consider these questions about the policy list: why each policy might have been made, who proposed it, who the policy is supposed to help, what other policies they might add and why.

2. Draw a parallel between your school and your community and state. Explain that just as at school, certain groups of people in the community and state have the job of making, applying, and enforcing laws. In the United States, many groups work together to make, apply, and enforce laws. These groups are referred to as the *government*. People who work in the government work for all of us because they were given their jobs by the *citizens*, or the people who live in the United States. Point out that just as teachers and students make policies for their classrooms, citizens and their governments make policies for their communities and states.

3. Explain that policies can change. For example, a class's policy about birth-

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Lesson Plan

day invitations may stay the same for a long time, or something may happen (perhaps a new teacher comes or students may have other ideas) and then the policy may need to change.

Offer this example to help students see why policies may change: A policy says, "Cafeteria trays must be cleaned into the garbage can." Then recycling becomes an important issue, so the policy was changed to say, "When cleaning cafeteria trays, paper items should be placed in the blue bins; everything else in the red bins." Emphasize that policies change as time, circumstances, and people's needs and beliefs change.

Unit Three—What Is Public Policy?

Time Needed: 1 class period

Materials Needed: chalkboard, chalk, Influencing Public Policy Poster

Procedure

1. Discuss with students how rules and policies are different from each other. Point out that, for example, school rules are followed by everyone in the school and do not differ from classroom to classroom. In most schools, the rules are written, and everyone knows the consequences of breaking the rules. Discuss some of the important rules in your school and the consequences of breaking those rules.

Explain that a policy may be different in every classroom. For example, what is the policy for sharpening pencils in this classroom? Is the policy different in other classrooms? If so, how? Remind students of the policies they compiled in Unit Two that applied to the whole school.

Ask students which is easier to change—a rule or a policy (a policy). Ask whether there are always known consequences for not following policies (no).

2. Write the term *public policy* on the board and read it aloud. Remind students that a *policy* is a plan or way of doing things. A policy may be set up by any person or group. The use of the word *public* indicates that the government is involved in making the policy.

Review the definition of *government* (people who have the job of making, applying, and enforcing laws). Explain that people get government jobs in many ways. Some, like the President, are elected. Some, like the heads of many departments, are hired. Some are appointed by someone in authority, like the President or the governor. Some people volunteer, or give their time, to be part of groups that help make policies. For example, school board members volunteer their time. Emphasize that all of these people work for groups that are part of the government.

3. To show the role of the government in making public policy, display the "Influencing Public Policy" poster. Point out that public policy can be made at many different levels (local, state, federal) and particularly emphasize that citizens have an important role in public policy making at each level.

Unit Four—Policy Makers and Public Policy

Time Needed: 1 class period

Materials Needed: Making Public Policy Handout

Procedure

1. Give each student a tag to wear that says "Citizen." Explain that everyone is a citizen of his or her class and school. Ask students what makes a good citizen of the class and of the school and what kinds of things a good citizen does. List their ideas on the board.

Then explain that students are also citizens of (name of your community) and (name of your state). Most are also citizens of the United States. Some may be citizens of other countries. Ask students what makes a good citizen of the community, state, and country. Add their ideas to those already on the board.

Remind students of the birthday invitation policy they discussed in Unit One. Talk about how being good citizens of their community, state, and country means doing the kinds of things they did when they considered the birthday invitation policy. Point out that they discussed their ideas, expressed their feelings, talked to others to find out their points of view, and voted.

Explain that citizens need to find out who makes the decisions. They need to talk or write to the person or people making the decisions about their ideas and feelings. Citizens need to be part of groups who are interested in the same things they are. Citizens need to vote when issues are put to a vote.

Ask students what they think a citizen could do if he or she has an idea or a problem. Mention some problems you have noticed and see whether students have some suggestions about what could be done. Encourage students to think about how they could help make a policy at their school.

2. Tell students that they are going to be public policy makers. First, have them brainstorm jobs in which the people help make public policies. Examples include President, school principal, police chief, fire chief, teachers in classrooms, parents in homes, and heads of departments or managers in companies.

Make a list of these jobs on the board. Divide the class into small groups, and have each group choose a job from the list. The group members are to choose one member to portray their policy maker (President, fire chief, etc.) and make a badge for him or her to wear. The other group members portray citizens who help the policy maker choose an issue and think of a policy that addresses the issue. Read aloud the information on the "Making Public Policy" handout to younger students. Distribute copies of the handout to older students. Encourage students to either choose one of the examples on the handout (if appropriate) or use the examples to help them think of their own issue. Parents, lawyers, aides, and the teacher can also help the groups.

The group member wearing the policy maker badge identifies his or her job, tells about the issue, and explains the policy that the group thinks will solve the issue. Encourage all students to talk about each proposed policy and explain what they like or dislike about that policy.

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Making a Classroom Policy

Read the policy and the students' opinions. What do you think of the policy? If you can think of other reasons why the policy is or is not a good one, write them in the **Yes** or **No** column.

A policy on birthday invitations being handed out in the classroom as proposed by Ms. Sanchez and her students:

No one may pass out birthday invitations unless he or she brings an invitation for every student in the class.

Some students' answers to the question, "Do you think this is a good policy?"

Yes	No
It's fair. No one is left out, so no one feels hurt.	You can't ask who you want to ask to your party.
If they don't want to ask everyone, they can mail the invitations instead.	It costs a lot to mail invitations. It's cheaper to hand them out.
School is a place for learning. It isn't the place for doing things, like handing out birthday invitations.	The school belongs to all of us, so if we want to give out invitations at school, we should be able to.
This is what we did last year. If it was OK last year, it's OK this year.	Just because we did this last year doesn't mean it's right.

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Making Public Policy

Your small group can choose one of these issues or use these examples to help you think of an issue. Work together to write a policy that you think solves the issue.

Policy-Making Job	Issue	Policy?
President of the United States	Should the President be able to decide which countries to be friendly with?	
Fire Chief	Students with matches have been seen in a high-risk fire area in the mountains. Should there be a policy about who can have matches in a forest, especially in a high-risk area?	
Principal	Should teachers be able to have coffee cups on their desks during class time?	
Department Head of Bike Safety	Should in-line skaters be allowed on bike paths?	
Police Chief	Should officers be allowed to take cars home from work each day?	
Food and Drug Department	A red dye is said to cause illness when taken in large doses. Should pill makers be allowed to use small amounts of this dye in tablets?	
_____	_____	
_____	_____	
	_____	
	_____	

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OVERVIEW OF THE LESSON

Objectives

During the lawyer's class session, students will—

- ✓ define and identify a policy
- ✓ learn how policies are related to laws and rules
- ✓ identify some important ideas to be considered when making policies
- ✓ recognize that government is involved in making public policies
- ✓ recognize that citizens have a role in making public policy

Lesson Summary

In the class sessions conducted by your lawyer, students are introduced to the concept of a policy as they follow a scenario in which a teacher and her students set up a policy to address an issue in their classroom. Then students focus on the need for policies at different levels and the changing nature of policies. Students compare rules and policies at the school level before moving on to the concept of public policy and the role of government in making public policy. By role-playing public policy makers, students are better able to identify issues that require policies and evaluate policies that address these issues and to recognize the role of citizens in public policy making.

Following your lawyer's visits, you might ask students to develop classroom policies or create a bulletin board featuring public policy makers. You might also use books from the bibliography in an activity with students. These extension activities are explained in greater detail below. Share students' work with your lawyer partner, and together plan partnering activities to use in upcoming civics instruction.

PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT

As the units are completed, students may begin compiling "Influencing Public Policy" portfolios. Have them place their activity sheets and any other work they did during the units in their portfolios. Encourage them to create pictures or stories that reflect what they think is important to remember about public policy and policy making. Suggest that as they progress through the units, they review their work and evaluate their understanding of the topics.

HOME CONNECTION

Ask students to work with family members to draw a picture of a situation at home that is governed by a policy. The picture should show the policy in action; for example, if the policy is that Dad cooks dinner and the children clean up after dinner, the picture should show these people performing these tasks. Ask students to bring their pictures to class. Have them take turns showing the pictures and explaining the policies depicted.

ACTIVITY SHEET/ANSWER KEYS

In the Student Packet is an Activity Sheet that asks students to work with key concepts and vocabulary from the lesson. Students may use the activities to strengthen their concept and vocabulary knowledge after your lawyer's visits. The correct answers to the activities follow:

A Policy for Each Place
Answers will vary.

Word Scramble

1. policy
2. citizens
3. authority
4. government
5. public

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

A Classroom Policy: Help students brainstorm situations in the classroom for which there are no rules but there could be policies. Ask small groups to choose one of the situations and decide on a possible policy for the situation. The group can write the policy or draw a picture of it. Have the groups share their policies with their classmates. As a class, discuss how the policies would work in the classroom.

Public Policy Makers: The discussion of public policy makers provides an opportunity to help students understand the concept of levels of government (local, state, federal). List the jobs of public policy makers on the board; for example, President, Supreme Court justice, governor, mayor, city councilor, and school board member. Encourage students to add any jobs they know. Then help them group the jobs by government level. Have students draw pictures to represent these people and arrange them on a bulletin board under the level titles "Local," "State," and "Federal" and the overall title "Public Policy Makers."

Policy in Books: Choose one of the books listed in the bibliography on page 37 or any other selection about public policy and read the selection together with the class. Discuss public policy and how it was made in the selection. Have students retell the situation in their own words. Encourage them to draw a picture to help them retell the information.

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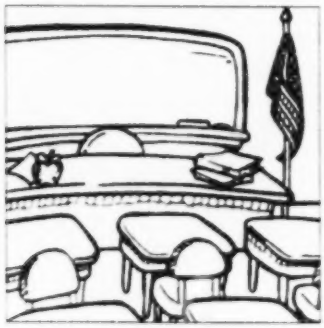
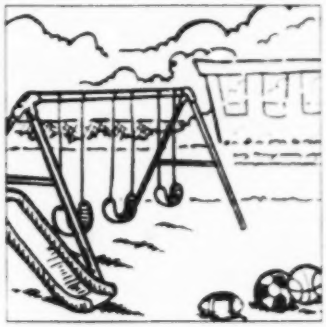
Activity Sheet

A Policy for Each Place Tell or write a policy that you know each place has, or a policy that each place might have.



in the classroom



on the playground

at home

Word Scramble Unscramble the words. Then write their letters in the blanks to finish the sentences.

Word List				
authority	citizens	government	policy	public

1. **y i p l o c**

   A __ __ __ __ __ __ is a plan or way of doing things that is set up when there is no law or rule.

2. **z i s t i c n e**

   People are __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ of their community, state, and country.

3. **r u y h a t t i o**

   Some jobs give people the __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ to make policies.

4. **m e g r o n n e v t**

   People who make, apply, and enforce laws are part of the

   __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __.

5. **b i p c u l**

   A __ __ __ __ __ __ policy is a policy made by the government and the citizens.

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Influencing Public Policy

Level B (Grades 4–6)

I'M THE PEOPLE

This level contains the following materials:

Lawyer's Pages

Before your visit, call or meet with the teacher to choose the activities that fit the instructional objectives and are best suited to the group. Remember to ask the teacher what has already been covered in the class. Together, decide which units you will present and when. Review the materials for your lessons and make copies as indicated.

- ❑ **Lesson Plan** (pages B-11–12)
- ❑ **Who Makes the Policy?** (page B-13)
- ❑ **Making and Following Policies** (page B-14)
- ❑ **Lawyer's Evaluation Form** (page 41)

Teacher's Pages

Make one copy of each page marked with the teacher's icon and send to the teacher in a Teacher's Packet one week before the class session.

- ❑ **Who Makes the Policy?** (page B-13)
- ❑ **Making and Following Policies** (page B-14)
- ❑ **Activity Guide** (page B-15)
  Overview of the Lesson
  Activity Sheet/Answer Keys
  Extension Activities (Bulletin Board, Policy Comparison, Changing a Policy)
- ❑ **Bibliography** (page 37)
- ❑ **Law-Related Education Essentials Matrix** (page 42)

Student's Pages

Make copies of the pages marked with the student icon for each student in class and distribute as part of a Student Packet.

- ❑ **Who Makes the Policy?** (page B-13)
- ❑ **Making and Following Policies** (page B-14)
- ❑ **Activity Sheet** (page B-16)

Lesson Plan

Objectives

During your session, students will—

- ✓ define a policy
- ✓ identify an issue that requires a policy
- ✓ develop a policy that addresses an issue
- ✓ explain why and how policies change
- ✓ differentiate between public policies and other policies
- ✓ identify policy makers

Vocabulary

As the following words come up in discussion, list them on the board and elicit definitions from students. Help them define the terms if necessary. Some of these terms appear on the Activity Sheet in the Student Packet, which will be distributed after your visit.

citizen
government
policy
policy maker
public issue
public policy

Lesson Overview

In this lesson, students use a school policy to define policy, understand that policies change, and recognize what and who influences policy making and changes. They differentiate between public policies, school policies, and business policies. Students then evaluate a situation that requires a community policy and write an appropriate policy.

Unit One—Evaluating a School Policy

Time Needed: 1 class period
Materials Needed: chalkboard, chalk

Procedure

1. Introduce yourself to the students. Then explain that for several years, the students at Heatherwood School have been trying to change a school policy. Point out that a *policy* is a plan or way of doing things. This particular policy states, "Hats may not be worn in the school building during school hours." Present the viewpoints of students and teachers at the school, and write them in note form on the board:

Students' Viewpoint

Students feel that the purpose of wearing hats or caps has changed. People no longer wear hats just as protection from the sun or for warmth. Hats have become fashion statements and are therefore part of the way students dress. They feel that not being able to wear hats is a dress code. They believe that hats are not in the same category as clothes that are too revealing or clothes with unacceptable words on them.

Teachers' Viewpoint

Teachers feel that students' hats might be disruptive and take away from their learning. They argue that in the past, wearing hats inside a building has been considered impolite and therefore should not be allowed.

2. First, ask students to identify the issue, restate the present policy, and identify the changes in the policy that the Heatherwood students want. Then write the following goals of people and society on the chalkboard and have students read them:

Goals

Freedom—the right to do or not do something as long as no one else is hurt; ensuring individual rights and opportunities
Security—protection against various types of risks
Tradition—doing what has always been done; makes people feel secure
Stability—resistant to change; firm and steady
Growth—producing more
Efficiency—making the best use of resources
Environment—the conditions by which a person is surrounded
Fairness—marked by impartiality and honesty; free of self-interest, prejudice, or favoritism

Divide the class into two groups and a panel. One group will take the viewpoint of the Heatherwood students. One group will take the viewpoint of the teachers. The panel will decide the policy. Have the groups copy the relevant viewpoint information and the goals from the board. Tell them that they can add ideas of their own, but they must take the viewpoint of the students or teachers as assigned and as stated on the board. Write the following questions on the board. Have the panel copy the goals and the questions, which panel members are to answer after they listen to the teacher and student groups present their different points of view.

- Should the policy stay as it is?
- Should the policy change? If the policy changes, what is the new policy?
- Why did you decide the way you did? How does your decision show that you considered the goals?

3. After students have either decided to keep the old policy or written a new policy, discuss the policy-making process and ask how they feel about the outcome.

Unit Two—Making Public Policies

Time Needed: 1 class period
Materials Needed: Influencing Public Policy Poster, Who Makes the Policy? Handout

Procedure

1. Use the hat policy-making simulation in Unit One to discuss policy making in the United States. Explain that just as teachers and students at Heatherwood School participated in making policy, citizens of the United States can and should participate in identifying public issues and making public policies. Define a *public issue* as a problem or concern that people have that needs to be resolved by a policy. Define a *public policy* as a plan

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or course of action made and followed by the government (local, state, or federal) and the citizens.

2. To show students how government and citizens are involved in the different levels of policy making, display the "Influencing Public Policy" poster. Emphasize that at each level, public policy making begins with the government listening to the people's needs, concerns, wishes, and opinions.

Offer students this example of federal public policy making: Federal law prohibits, or forbids, the sale of foods and medicines that are harmful. The law does not say exactly what *harmful* means. Questions about what makes a food or drug harmful are left to a government agency, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), to answer. On behalf of the public, the FDA makes public policies that interpret, or explain, what *harmful* means.

3. Ask students whether it is possible for a policy to become outdated. Have them consider this idea: The tomato, which was once thought to be poisonous, might not have been approved as a safe food by the FDA. Once the tomato was proven to be nonpoisonous, the FDA would have had to change the public policy about that food.

Tell students that Heatherwood students were able to change the school's hat-wearing policy. The new policy states that students may wear hats in the school building unless the hats are disrupting the learning process. Ask students what would happen if Heatherwood students began wearing hats that showed gang membership, and fights began to break out. Discuss how and why a change in the situation at the school might affect the policy on hats. Point out that if hats with certain colors and symbols became associated with particular gangs and fights began to break out because hats with gang allegiances were being worn, safety issues might bring about another change in the hat-wearing policy.

4. Distribute the "Who Makes the Policy?" handout and have students work in pairs or small groups to read and answer the questions about policy makers. (1. Business; 2. Government; 3. School; 4. Government; 5. School; 6. Business; 7. School; 8. Government; 9. Business; 10. School)

Unit Three—Writing Policies to Solve Problems

Time Needed: 1 class period
Materials Needed: Making and Following Policies Handout

Procedure

1. Set up the following situation about a conflict between neighbors to illustrate the need for policies:

The neighborhood association has a rule that says, "Yards must be kept neat and attractive." Mr. Jones lives in the neighborhood. He does not mow his lawn. He does not plant his flowers in rows. He believes that a yard should be left in its natural state. His neighbors believe that a neat yard should have grass that is cut and flowers that are grown in borders. Several neighborhood association members go to talk to Mr. Jones. They want him to change his yard so that it complies with the neighborhood rule. Mr. Jones doesn't feel that what they are asking is fair. He thinks his yard *is* neat and attractive, and besides, it is the way he likes it. Although he wants to be a good neighbor, he doesn't think he should have to give up what he likes just to make the neighbors happy.

2. Ask students what the issues in this situation are. (Possible answers: fairness, freedom, group needs vs. personal needs, environmental needs, safety and health issues)

Have small groups of students work together to write policies that will help both the neighbors and Mr. Jones and still meet the neighborhood rule that yards should be neat and attractive. Ask students to consider these questions as they work:

- How do the needs and beliefs of the neighbors and Mr. Jones influence you as you write the policies?
- Who should be included in the policy making?
- Might the policies for this neighborhood change over time as different people with different beliefs move into the area?

When students are finished, discuss these questions:

- How can citizens participate in policy making? (Possible answers: They can talk about their ideas and feelings, they can attend meetings where issues are being discussed, they can write letters to policy makers, they can vote.)
- Why should citizens participate in policy making? (Possible answers: In a democratic society, it is the responsibility of citizens to participate in their government; by involving themselves in public policy making, citizens help ensure that their needs are met.)

3. Distribute the "Making and Following Policies" handout to pairs or small groups of students. Have them decide what needs or desires of people might have led to each policy being set up and what rule or law might be made to make sure the policy is followed. (Example: 1. Public Need: People want and need to be protected from bad meat. Rule/Law: Meat must meet certain safety standards set by the government. If it does not, it cannot be shipped or sold.) Later, have students share and discuss their answers with their classmates.

"Twelve percent of the class think you're doing a good job, 6% have no opinion, and 82% think you should pack it in."

From the Wall Street Journal, *December 21, 1994. Permission, Cartoon Features Syndicate.*

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Who Makes the Policy?

Read each policy and decide whether it is a public policy (one made by the government), a business policy, or a school policy.

	Government	Business	School
1. Employees are entitled to a one-week vacation after they have worked for one year.	_____	_____	_____
2. No more than 2% of the smoke released into the air by an industry can contain pollutants.	_____	_____	_____
3. No sliding down the slide headfirst.	_____	_____	_____
4. Trash left in cans at the curb will be picked up on Tuesdays and Fridays.	_____	_____	_____
5. No sitting on the tables in the lunchroom.	_____	_____	_____
6. Merchandise can be returned if the customer has the receipt.	_____	_____	_____
7. No more than six children on the jungle gym at one time.	_____	_____	_____
8. New automobile license plates will be issued every five years.	_____	_____	_____
9. Employees are entitled to two 15-minute breaks each day.	_____	_____	_____
10. Teachers may request that up to 10 books be held on the reserve shelf.	_____	_____	_____

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Making and Following Policies

Read each policy. What might people have needed or desired that could have led to this policy being made? What rule or law could be made to make sure the policy is followed? Write your ideas on the lines.

1. **Policy:** Meat shipped between states must be approved.

   Public Need: _____

   Rule/Law: _____

2. **Policy:** The President decides to exchange ambassadors with certain countries.

   Public Need: _____

   Rule/Law: _____

3. **Policy:** Running in the halls is not allowed.

   Public Need: _____

   Rule/Law: _____

4. **Policy:** People are to be drafted for military service.

   Public Need: _____

   Rule/Law: _____

5. **Policy:** Speeding is not allowed on streets, roads, or highways.

   Public Need: _____

   Rule/Law: _____

6. **Policy:** You may not take someone's else property.

   Public Need: _____

   Rule/Law: _____

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Activity Guide

OVERVIEW OF THE LESSON

Objectives

During the lawyer's class session, students will—

- ✓ define a policy
- ✓ identify an issue that requires a policy
- ✓ develop a policy that addresses an issue
- ✓ explain why and how policies change
- ✓ differentiate between public policies and other policies
- ✓ identify policy makers

Lesson Summary

The Unit One class session focuses students' attention on the concept of a policy by offering a hypothetical involving students' desire to change a school policy. Students use differing viewpoints to discuss the issue and evaluate the policy changes. In Unit Two, students learn about public policies, who makes these policies, and how the policies can change over time. Unit Three presents a situation that requires a policy, and students are asked to evaluate the situation and develop a policy.

Following your lawyer's visits, you might have students collect pictures for a policy-makers bulletin board, compare and evaluate policies described in magazines and newspapers, or address a school policy they feel is outdated by proposing a revision. These extension activities are explained in greater detail below. Share students' work with your lawyer partner, and together plan partnering activities to use in upcoming civics instruction.

PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT

As the units are completed, students may begin making "Influencing Public Policy" portfolios. Have them place their activity sheets and any other work they did during the units in their portfolios. Suggest that as they progress through the units, they review and evaluate their understanding of policies and policy making.

HOME CONNECTION

Ask students to take home their "Making and Following Policies" handout and use it as the basis of a discussion with family members about what policies are and why they are needed. Suggest that students and family members identify a policy currently in use in their home and clarify why this policy was established. Then students can report to the class on the policy.

ACTIVITY SHEET/ANSWER KEYS

In the Student Packet is an Activity Sheet that asks students to work with key concepts and vocabulary terms from the lesson. Students may use the activity to strengthen their concept and vocabulary knowledge after your lawyer's visits. The correct answers to the activity follow:

Word Puzzle

Across

2. freedom
4. fairness
5. policy
6. tradition
7. citizen

Down

1. policy maker
3. issue
5. public

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Bulletin Board: Have students look for pictures in magazines and newspapers of people whose jobs involve making policies. Be sure students include local and school newspapers in their search. Remind them that policies can be made in many places and on many levels. They might include pictures of the President, Cabinet members, the governor, the mayor, city council members, judges, the school principal, and citizens. Encourage them to draw pictures of policy makers they may not be able to find pictures of, such as their parents, teachers, or themselves. Have students assemble the pictures in a bulletin-board display titled "Policy Makers."

Policy Comparison: Have students scan newspapers and newsmagazines for the word *policy* and then read to find out what the word is being used to describe. Encourage them to collect as many examples as possible. Have them use the examples in class to compare types of policies, the circumstances under which policies arise, and the ways in which they change. Ask students to note who participates in setting up policies and who is expected to follow them. Students might put the information into chart form for easier comparison.

Changing a Policy: Acquire a list of school policies or help students compile their own list. Poll them to choose a school policy that they feel needs to be changed. Help students determine why the policy was originally established and how current conditions affect the policy.

Divide the class into small groups, and discuss possible changes that could be made to the policy. Have each group write a revised policy. Remind students to include reasons why the change should be made. After the groups present their revised policies to the class, vote to determine the most popular revision. Have a group of volunteers present the revised policy to the school administration.

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Word Puzzle

Read each definition. Then choose a word from the list that matches the definition and write it in the crossword puzzle.

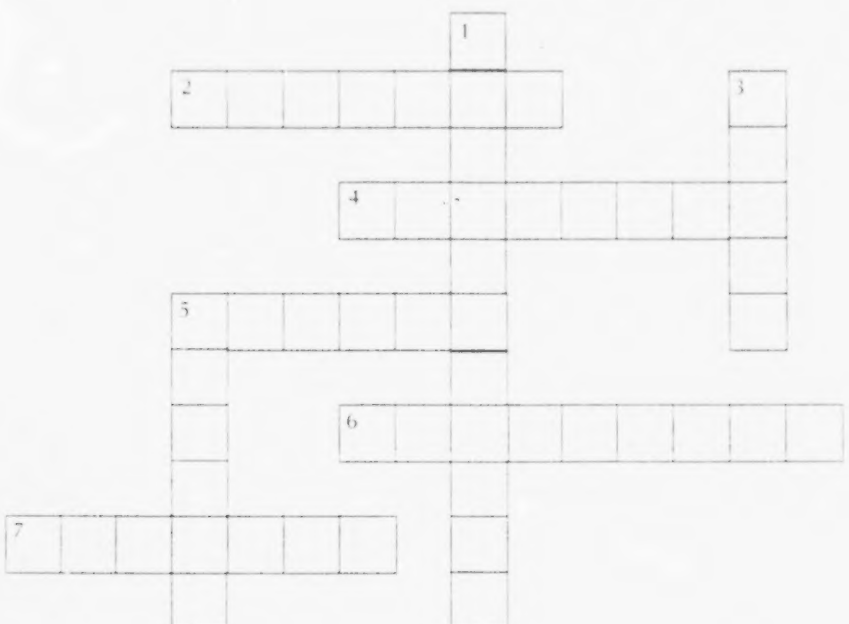
citizen fairness freedom issue policy policy maker public tradition

ACROSS

2. the right to do or not do something as long as no one else is hurt
4. impartiality and honesty, shown by not favoring one over another
5. a plan or way of doing things; a course of action chosen to guide present and future decisions
6. the doing of things as they have always been done; things passed down from generation to generation
7. an inhabitant of a city, town, or community; a person who is born in or chooses to belong to a nation, who owes loyalty to that nation and is entitled to certain rights from it

DOWN

1. a person whose job gives him or her the authority to make the final decision on a course of action
3. when considered public, a problem or concern that needs to be resolved by a policy
5. when applied to policies, made and followed by the government and citizens



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Influencing Public Policy

Level C (Grades 6–8)

This level contains the following materials:

Lawyer's Pages

Before your visit, call or meet with the teacher to choose the activities that fit the instructional objectives and are best suited to the group. Remember to ask the teacher what has already been covered in the class. Together, decide which units you will present and when. Review the materials for your lessons and make copies as indicated.

- ❑ **Lesson Plan** (pages C-18–19)
- ❑ **Learning More About the Policy** (page C-20)
- ❑ **Public Opinion Poll** (page C-21)
- ❑ **Lawyer's Evaluation Form** (page 41)

Teacher's Pages

Make one copy of each page marked with the teacher's icon and send to the teacher in a Teacher's Packet one week before the class session.

- ❑ **Learning More About the Policy** (page C-20)
- ❑ **Public Opinion Poll** (page C-21)
- ❑ **Activity Guide** (page C-22)
  - Overview of the Lesson
  - Activity Sheet/Answer Keys
  - Extension Activities (Newspaper Search, Opinion Posters/Advertisements, Biographical Sketch)
- ❑ **Bibliography** (page 37)
- ❑ **Law-Related Education Essentials Matrix** (page 42)

Student's Pages

Make copies of the pages marked with the student icon for each student in class and distribute as part of a Student Packet.

- ❑ **Learning More About the Policy** (page C-20)
- ❑ **Public Opinion Poll** (page C-21)
- ❑ **Activity Sheet** (page C-23)

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Objectives

During your session, students will—

- ✓ define public policy
- ✓ describe how public policy is shaped by political leaders, special interest groups, the media, state and federal courts, and individual citizens
- ✓ explain how citizens can influence the formation of public policy
- ✓ research and take a poll on a proposed policy
- ✓ take and defend a position on a local public policy issue

Vocabulary

As the following terms come up in discussion, list them on the board and elicit definitions from students. Some of these terms appear on the Activity Sheet in the Student Packet, which students may complete after your visits.

citizens
law
policy
policy making
public policy

Lesson Overview

This lesson explores the making of public policy in a democratic society, emphasizing how citizens and others can influence public policy decisions. Students engage in analyzing and developing policy proposals on requiring children in elementary and middle schools to wear uniforms to school. Students examine causes and effects of the problem and potential consequences of the proposal. They also conduct a public opinion poll to determine how people in the community feel about the proposed requirement. Finally, students create their own policy proposal on the issue.

Unit One—Defining Public Policy

Time Needed: 1 class period
Materials Needed: Influencing Public Policy Poster, recent newspapers and newsmagazines

Procedure

1. Introduce yourself to the students. Then display the "Influencing Public Policy" poster. Explain that public policy is whatever government decides to do or not to do about a problem in the community after learning about the needs and opinions of community members. A *public policy* is a plan or course of action made by government to address the problem. The public directly influences the policy that is made. Have students name some public policy issues in their community. If they need help, ask whether the issue of wearing school uniforms has come up in their school or community. Point out that a policy is a general plan. The policy must be carried out by specific rules or laws. Explain that if a school district adopted a policy that all students must wear uniforms to school, rules would then be made about the nature of the uniform, who must wear it, and when.

2. Point out that community members, or citizens, can change public policy. Ask students whether they know the story of Ryan White, a student who was infected with AIDS. Add the following details to the story as students contribute what they know: Ryan White was a 13-year-old student who acquired the AIDS virus from a blood transfusion. In late 1984, Ryan was very sick and missed school for several months. When he returned to school, the school board, fearful that Ryan might infect other students with AIDS, would not let him attend class. (The public was only beginning to learn about AIDS and how the virus is transmitted.) Ryan fought the school board's policy by suing the officials in district court. In 1986, the court ordered school officials to allow Ryan to attend school. However, on his return, some students refused to be in the same classroom with him and made his school life difficult. Ryan and his family moved to another town, but Ryan did not stop fighting. He traveled to other schools and talked to many students about the AIDS virus. He helped make a television movie, *The Ryan White Story*, and testified before the President's Commission on AIDS. He also wrote a book answering questions young people asked him most frequently about AIDS. Ryan White died in 1990, the same year that Congress passed the Ryan White Comprehensive Care Act to help AIDS patients get medical treatment. Ryan became a model for how young people can influence public policy. Because of his actions, not only his school board's but his nation's policy changed toward the treatment of AIDS patients.

3. Have students work in three or four small groups. Have the groups list at least three public policy issues in the school, community, or nation. Students may want to consult newspapers and newsmagazines in the library or classroom. Then have the groups present the issues to the class and take a poll, by show of hands, of how many students are aware of each issue, how they found out about it, and whether they think it is an important issue.

Unit Two—Gathering Information on a Public Policy

Time Needed: 2 or more class periods
Materials Needed: Learning More About the Policy Handout

Procedure

1. Explain that one policy that has recently been discussed in many communities is that of requiring public-school students to wear uniforms to school. [Some key court cases related to this issue are *Tinker v. Des Moines School District*, 393 U.S. 503 (1969); *Bethel School District v. Fraser*, 478 U.S. 675 (1986); *Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier*, 484 U.S. 260 (1988). For more information about these cases, see *Update on Law-Related Education*, Spring 1994, Vol. 18, No. 2. For ordering this issue of the ABA's law-related education magazine for classroom teachers, the cost is $6. Call (312) 988-5735, or write to ABA/YEFC, 541 N. Fairbanks Court, 15th Floor, Chicago, IL 60611-3314. Issues of *Update* are available through ERIC/ChESS. Call (800) 266-3815 or (800) LET-ERIC. Full texts are available on microfiche in libraries and in photocopy form through ERIC's document reproduction service. They are not available in electronic form.]

Describe the situation in one community: Citizens have become concerned about student academic performance and personal behavior in the public schools, including gangs. News items on television and in the newspapers have reported on the problems created by a lack of discipline and increasingly violent behavior among young people. The

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news reports described incidents at local schools in which minor conflicts over clothing escalated into fights resulting in injury. Theft and robbery of name-brand clothing, the reports stated, had also become a serious problem in schools.

Many parents of school-aged children are concerned for the personal safety of students during school hours. They also are concerned that clothing-related disruptions increase discipline problems and contribute to a poor learning environment in the schools. Some think the problem may get worse if something is not done. Others in the community believe that the problem is being exaggerated in the media. They believe that student dress is not as important an issue as what students are or are not learning in school.

In response to community concerns, the school board is considering changing the current policy about school uniforms in the district. A recently elected member of the board has proposed that the board adopt a policy requiring all students in elementary and middle schools in the district to wear uniforms to school. The proposed policy would permit individual schools to decide what the uniform would look like. Each school would also decide how it would implement and enforce the policy. However, the school board would require each school to submit a plan for board approval to ensure compliance with the policy.

2. Ask students how they think the members of the community have reacted to the proposed policy, eliciting that it is a controversial issue: Some people favor it while others oppose it. Write the school-uniform policy stated above on the chalkboard. Have students work in three or four small groups. Distribute the "Learning More About the Policy" handout and explain that the groups will use it to analyze the school-uniform policy and decide whether it should be changed. Have students apply the proposed policy to their own school district and perform the steps listed on the handout to analyze the policy. They should discuss each point and take notes on their discussions.

3. Divide the class into these special interest groups: students, parents, teachers, school administrators, civil rights groups, local businesses, and governmental agencies. Explain that civil rights groups include groups such as the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), which helps protect the fundamental rights of individuals as described in the Constitution. Governmental agencies might include agencies that help administer educational programs or deal with delinquent students. Have each group identify its particular interests in the issue of requiring school uniforms and the values it might promote.

4. After the groups have discussed the policy, have them work as a class and list the arguments each interest group would make for the policy, listing them on the chalkboard. Then have students suggest the arguments each group would make against the policy and list them. Include the following arguments in your discussion:

Those in favor think the policy would

a. reduce the number of clothing-related arguments, fights, and robberies in school.

b. improve student performance by reducing nonstudy-related distractions.

c. create equality among students from different economic backgrounds.

d. increase security in schools by identifying nonstudents.

e. prevent students from wearing gang-related clothing.

f. promote a sense of school community.

g. increase security for students walking to and from school by identifying them as students.

Those opposed think the policy would

a. create a financial burden for families with less income.

b. create a financial burden for the school district if the policy violates a state law requiring a free public education since the district would have to pay for the uniforms.

c. lower students' creativity and sense of individuality.

d. violate constitutional guarantees of freedom of expression.

e. be unfair in applying to elementary and middle school but not high school students.

f. create inequality among different schools in the district.

Unit Three—How Is Public Policy Decided in a Democracy?

Time Needed: 1 class period

Materials Needed: Public Opinion Poll Handout

Procedure

1. Have students consider the examples of Ryan White and public-school dress codes. Ask: How does a community make a decision regarding public policy? As students discuss the question, emphasize the following process:

a. Citizens recognize that a problem exists. They learn about a problem through the news media, politicians, citizens' groups, or government actions such as new laws.

b. People generate ideas about how to deal with the problem. They may use letters, telegrams, and telephone calls to contact lawmakers and other citizens. They may form interest groups. Along the way, the interested citizens must gather information, discuss solutions, and compromise about the best solution.

c. Once a policy is agreed on, people must go to the local, state, or national government to put their solution into practice. Only government has the authority to enact laws. For example, a public-school system would need rules from their school board or other governing body in order to put a dress code into effect.

d. Once the government has made laws pertaining to a policy, agencies must carry the policy out. For example, the principal of a particular school is responsible for carrying out the school system's dress code policy.

Emphasize that citizens have not only the right but the responsibility to help make public policy.

2. Distribute the "Public Opinion Poll" handout to small groups. Tell students they are to conduct a poll on the issue of requiring public-school students to wear uniforms. Have the groups conduct interviews of students, parents, teachers, school administrators, school board members, local businesspeople, and workers at community agencies. Have each group compile the results of its interviews and propose a policy. Have the groups present their results to the class and, if possible, to the school principal, or parent-teacher group.

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Learning More About the Policy

A. Identifying the Problem

1. What problem(s) will a student-uniform policy address?
2. How serious is the problem?
3. To what extent do current dress codes affect the problem?
4. What, aside from dress codes, is currently being done to address the problem(s)?

B. Identifying Current Policy and Legal Issues Involved

1. What, if any, is the current policy regarding student dress in your public-school system?
2. What state laws, if any, apply to regulating student dress in the public schools?
3. What state or federal court decisions apply to regulating student dress in the public schools?

C. Analyzing the Proposed Policy

1. What is the proposed policy for requiring public-school students to wear uniforms?
2. What benefits might result from the proposed school-uniform policy?
3. What disadvantages might result from the proposed school-uniform policy?
4. What resources will individuals need to implement the school-uniform policy? What resources will the schools and school district need to implement the policy? Are these resources available?
5. Are there other communities in your state, or in the nation, where a similar policy was adopted? What was the policy? What were the effects of the policy in the schools in these communities?

D. Evaluating the Policy

1. What individual and/or community values and interests does this issue involve?
2. What disagreements might exist in the community over the proposed policy? Who would support the policy? Who would oppose the policy?

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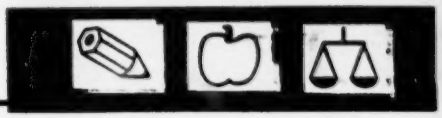
Public Opinion Poll



Step 1: Introduce yourself. Explain that you are conducting an interview to find out what community members think about a proposed policy requiring public-school students to wear uniforms. Ask the person whether he or she would be willing to respond to your questions.

Step 2: Request identifying information.

Person's Name: _____

Check one:
_____ student (elementary, middle school, high school)
_____ teacher (elementary, middle school, high school)
_____ principal (elementary, middle school, high school)
_____ parent (elementary, middle school, high school)
_____ local business
(name of business: _____)
_____ local government official
(name of agency: _____)
_____ other (identify: _____)

Step 3: Explain the problems that the school-uniform policy will address. Ask for responses to the following questions.

1. Do you think these problems are important? Why?
2. How serious are these problems?
3. Which of the following do you think is true?
   - There is no rule or law for dealing with the problem.
   - The rules for dealing with the problem are not adequate.
   - The rules for dealing with the problem are adequate but are not being enforced.
4. Who should take responsibility for solving the problem? Why?

Step 4: Explain the proposed school-uniform policy and ask for responses to the following questions.

1. What do you think might be some advantages of the proposed policy?
2. What do you think might be some disadvantages of the proposed policy?
3. Would you favor adopting this policy? Why?
4. Are you familiar with schools or school districts that require uniforms? If so, do you think the policy is effective?
5. What other things do you think could be done to address the problem?

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OVERVIEW OF THE LESSON

Objectives

During the lawyer's class session, students will—

- ✓ define public policy
- ✓ describe how public policy is shaped by political leaders, special interest groups, the media, state and federal courts, and individual citizens
- ✓ explain how citizens can influence the formation of public policy
- ✓ research and take a poll on a proposed policy
- ✓ take and defend a position on a local public policy issue

Lesson Summary

Your lawyer introduces the lesson with a definition of public policy. Through a study of the Ryan White case, students learn how citizens influence public policy decisions. In Unit Two, students examine the public-policy issue of requiring uniforms in public schools, researching the issue and conducting a discussion among various special interest groups. In Unit Three, students conduct a public opinion poll, propose a policy on school uniforms, and share their policy with community legislators.

Following your lawyer's visits, you might ask students to search in local newspapers for articles and other items dealing with local issues or create posters or advertisements that present their opinions on local issues. You might also have them write a biographical sketch of Ryan White or another person who influenced public policy. These extension activities are explained more fully below. Share students' work with your lawyer, and make plans to include her or him as a participant in your civics instruction throughout the year.

PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT

As the units are completed, students may place their handouts, activity sheets, and research on the topics in their "Influencing Public Policy" portfolios. Encourage students to review their work and evaluate their understanding of public policy and policy making as they progress through the units.

HOME CONNECTION

Remind students that they are to take home the Public Opinion Poll and solicit the opinions of their family members. Suggest that they take the poll first before they discuss with family members what they learned in class about the school uniforms issue.

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ACTIVITY SHEET/ANSWER KEYS

In each Student Packet is an Activity Sheet. After your lawyer's visits, students may use the activities to strengthen vocabulary and concepts related to influencing public policy. Note that students are to look for the same terms in the word search as they matched with definitions in the first activity.

Matching

1. e	**5.** h
2. g	**6.** c
3. b	**7.** a
4. f	**8.** d

Word Search

[(Col, Row) Direction—Word]
(01,08) across—SPECIAL INTERESTS
(02,02) across—POLICY MAKING
(02,02) down—PUBLIC POLICY
(02,12) across—CITIZENS
(04,03) down—PARTICIPATE
(06,03) diagonal—INFLUENCE
(12,04) down—GOVERNMENT
(15,01) down—COMMUNITY

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Newspaper Search: Have students find examples in local newspapers of articles, editorials, and cartoons that illustrate public policy issues in their community. After they have shared these examples with the class, discuss how these articles, editorials, and cartoons are intended to influence citizens' thinking about the issues and whether students think that they do so.

Opinion Posters/Advertisements: Have small groups of students create posters or advertisements that offer their opinion on the school-uniform issue or a current local or national issue. First, discuss with students how they can present their opinions in ways that might influence other people to accept those opinions. Point out that, as with all advertising, the posters or ads should be eye-catching, persuasive, and easy to understand. If possible, arrange to have the posters or ads displayed in the school.

Biographical Sketch: Encourage students to find out more about Ryan White. Have them spend some time researching in the library. As a starting point, suggest that they look for the article "Candle in the Wind: The Life and Legacy of Ryan White" by Ann Marie Cunningham in *Cobblestone: The History Magazine for Young People*, December 1993. Then have students write a short biographical sketch about Ryan White. As an alternative, you may wish to have them find and write a sketch about another person who has had a major impact on public policy.

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Matching

For each term in the left column, write the letter of its definition from the right column.

____	1. public policy	a. process by which a problem is recognized, ideas about how to solve the problem are proposed, and one course of action is decided upon
____	2. participate	b. ruling or management of a community, city, state, or country; the people responsible for ruling a community, city, state, or country
____	3. government	c. use the power to act or have an effect on others
____	4. citizens	d. all the people living in the same area or town, often subject to the same laws
____	5. special interests	e. plan or course of action made by government to address a problem
____	6. influence	f. people living in a community, city, state, and/or country who are entitled to certain rights
____	7. policy making	g. take part in; join or share with others
____	8. community	h. desires and concerns of groups that try to get government to act to their advantage

Word Search

Find the terms from the left column above in the puzzle. Words may be spelled up, down, or diagonally.

C	A	P	A	D	F	I	T	E	W	Q	U	I	G	C	D
B	P	O	L	I	C	Y	M	A	K	I	N	G	Y	O	T
V	U	H	P	S	I	J	E	X	O	P	N	U	T	M	C
K	B	E	A	R	T	N	L	O	Q	U	G	I	E	M	P
A	L	T	R	E	A	C	F	W	E	R	O	S	G	U	J
M	I	N	T	U	E	R	V	L	A	N	V	E	H	N	T
D	C	N	I	D	E	R	U	N	U	Y	E	D	L	I	A
S	P	E	C	I	A	L	I	N	T	E	R	E	S	T	S
F	O	S	I	P	Y	G	A	F	M	O	N	Z	O	Y	M
S	L	E	P	T	O	P	H	I	R	E	M	C	D	W	U
P	I	K	A	S	L	E	R	J	I	P	E	N	E	D	S
W	C	I	T	I	Z	E	N	S	D	R	N	O	V	E	S
A	Y	U	E	N	N	I	W	O	R	R	T	B	U	Z	Y

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Influencing Public Policy

Level D (Grades 9–12)

I'M THE PEOPLE

This level contains the following materials:

Lawyer's Pages

Before your visit, call or meet with the teacher to choose the activities that fit the instructional objectives and are best suited to the group. Remember to ask the teacher what has already been covered in the class. Together, decide which units you will present and when. Review the materials for your lessons and make copies as indicated.

- ❑ **Lesson Plan** (pages D-25–26)
- ❑ **A Proposed Curfew Ordinance** (page D-27)
- ❑ **Learning More About the Policy** (page D-28)
- ❑ **Public Opinion Poll** (page D-29)
- ❑ **Student Forum** (pages D-30–34)
- ❑ **Lawyer's Evaluation Form** (page 41)

Teacher's Pages

Make one copy of each page marked with the teacher's icon and send to the teacher in a Teacher's Packet one week before the class session.

- ❑ **A Proposed Curfew Ordinance** (page D-27)
- ❑ **Learning More About the Policy** (page D-28)
- ❑ **Public Opinion Poll** (page D-29)
- ❑ **Student Forum** (pages D-30–34)
- ❑ **Activity Guide** (page D-35)
  - Overview of the Lesson
  - Activity Sheet/Answer Keys
  - Extension Activities (Editorial Cartoons, Policy-Making Diagrams, Policy Making in Books)
- ❑ **Bibliography** (page 37)
- ❑ **Law-Related Education Essentials Matrix** (page 42)

Student's Pages

Make copies of the pages marked with the student icon for each student in class and distribute as part of a Student Packet.

- ❑ **A Proposed Curfew Ordinance** (page D-27)
- ❑ **Learning More About the Policy** (page D-28)
- ❑ **Public Opinion Poll** (page D-29)
- ❑ **Student Forum** (pages D-30–34)
- ❑ **Activity Sheet** (page D-36)

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Lesson Plan

Objectives

During your session, students will—

- ✓ define public policy and describe how public policies are formed in a democratic society
- ✓ discuss how the public agenda is shaped by political leaders, special interest groups, the media, the courts, and individual citizens
- ✓ explain how citizens can monitor and influence the formation of public policy
- ✓ take and defend a position on a public policy issue arising from a local government

Vocabulary

As these terms come up in discussion, list them on the board and elicit definitions from students. Help them define the terms if necessary. Some of these terms appear on the Activity Sheet in the Student Packet, which students may complete after your visit.

citizens
interest groups
policy making
public policy

Lesson Overview

This lesson explores the nature of public policy in a democratic society, the policy-making process, and ways in which citizens can influence public policy decisions. Students learn how young people might influence a policy decision in their community. They analyze and develop policy proposals imposing a curfew on young people under the age of 18 in response to the rise in juvenile crime in the community. Students gather information on the seriousness of the problem, laws and court decisions that may impact adoption of the proposal, and the effectiveness of similar policies in other communities. They also conduct a public opinion poll to determine how people in the community feel about the proposed curfew. Finally, students create their own policy proposal about a curfew in the community, and, if possible, share their plan with policy makers in their community. In the forum, students evaluate a school district's proposed policy on character education.

Unit One—What Is Public Policy?

Time Needed: 1 class period
Materials Needed: Influencing Public Policy Poster, several copies of recent local newspapers

Procedure

1. Introduce yourself to the students. Display the "Influencing Public Policy" poster. Point out that one community issue facing young people today is that of curfew laws—local ordinances making it illegal for people under a certain age, such as 18, to be on the streets or in a public place after a certain hour, such as 10:00 or 11:00 P.M. Explain that an issue such as the curfew issue is a public policy issue. *Public policy* is whatever government decides to do, or not to do, about a problem in the community after learning about the needs and opinions of community members. It is a plan, or course of action, made by government to address the problem. A public policy must be lawful and constitutional. Therefore, legislative bodies, such as a city council or the Congress of the United States, are usually involved in making public policy. The executive branch of government is also involved: A mayor, governor, or President of the United States may publicize an issue, assemble a commission, and issue regulations to enforce laws made by legislative bodies. Finally, the courts make public policy by reviewing laws passed by legislative bodies and actions taken by the executive branch.

2. Ask students which members of the community, or citizens, would take a special interest in a curfew law (young people, police officers, parents, teachers, business owners). Explain that these sets of community members with various viewpoints on an issue are known as special interest groups. Have students mention public policy issues currently being discussed in their school or community. Ask them how they became aware of these issues. Explain that this is the first step in the policy-making process: Having people become aware that a problem exists.

3. Have students, working in small groups, go to the library or look through recent newspapers in the classroom and find articles about current public policy issues. Have the class as a whole discuss the issues. Ask: In what ways besides the news media have you been made aware that a specific policy issue exists? Encourage students to discuss hearing about a public policy issue through conversations with their peers; speeches, letters, or telephone calls by special interest group members or politicians; or elections or court actions.

Unit Two—Examining a Public Policy Issue: Curfews

Time Needed: 2 class periods
Materials Needed: A Proposed Curfew Ordinance Handout, Learning More About the Policy Handout

Procedure

1. Discuss the public policy issue of curfews for young people as illustrated in the following curfew case study. In the early 1990s, Dallas, Texas, had a major problem with juvenile crime. In 1990, juveniles committed 40 murders, 91 sex offenses, 233 robberies, and 230 aggravated assaults. In addition, many young people were crime victims, and police wanted more options for dealing with youth gangs. One response to the problem was the adoption of a curfew. This made it a misdemeanor for any youth under 17 to be in a public place (such as streets, common areas of schools, hospitals, or apartment buildings) or a place of amusement or entertainment after 11 P.M. on weeknights and after midnight on weekends. The curfew made exceptions for people who were married; accompanied by adults; returning home from work, or school, civic, or religious functions; running parental errands; or exercising First Amendment rights. The law placed a $500 fine on 1) youth for each violation; 2) parents who permitted or, by insufficient control, allowed a minor to break the curfew, and 3) owners, operators, and employees of establishments who knowingly allowed youth on the premises during curfew hours. Four parents challenged the curfew's constitutionality, claiming it violated equal protection because it treated persons under 17 differently from those 17 and

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older. They claimed that youth have a fundamental right to move about freely and that the curfew violated parents' right of privacy by dictating how their children must be raised. The lower court ruled that the curfew violated equal protection. However, the court of appeals reversed the district court, 11 F.3d 488 (1993), ruling that the law met the requirement of meeting a compelling government interest and being narrowly tailored to achieve that interest. The appeals court also ruled that governmental interference in parental right to privacy was minimal.

2. Distribute the "A Proposed Curfew Ordinance" handout and have students read the background information silently. Then have volunteers read each item of the proposed ordinance aloud. Discuss the proposed ordinance, asking the following questions:

a. What makes a curfew for young people a public policy issue? (It involves a problem in the local community; it will be decided by the local government after the citizens of the community have offered their opinions and discussed possible solutions.)

b. Why do you think residents in the community disagree about the seriousness of the problem and the proposed solution? (Some people may not see evidence of the problem; some may think the problem involves only a few young people and should not affect all young people; some special interest groups, such as young people and business owners, may find the solution opposed to their interests.)

c. What arguments do you think those in favor of the ordinance might make? (The ordinance would keep juvenile criminals off the streets; it would make law-enforcement officials' jobs easier; it would protect all young people from becoming crime victims; it would encourage all young people to study or seek positive entertainment.)

d. What arguments do you think those opposed to the ordinance might make? (It will be hard to enforce; it is unfair to punish all young people for the actions of a few; it is biased against people of a certain age; it will not help because juvenile criminals will get around it; it will be unfair to business owners with a young clientele.)

e. What special interest groups might be in favor of the ordinance? (Anti-crime groups, law enforcement)

f. What special interest groups might be opposed to the ordinance? (Young people, business interests)

g. What do you think citizens in the community should do to help resolve the issue one way or another? (Hold meetings with speakers on both sides, hold panel discussions, research curfews in other communities, appoint committees including members from various special interest groups to propose solutions.)

3. Distribute the "Learning More About the Policy" handout. Have students work in several small groups. Students should analyze the ordinance described on the "A Proposed Curfew Ordinance" handout by answering and discussing the four sets of questions. Encourage students to go to the library to research recently enacted curfew laws in Atlanta, Georgia; Buffalo, New York; Tampa and Dade County, Florida; Dallas, Texas; Hartford, Connecticut; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Newark, New Jersey; and Phoenix, Arizona. Have the groups report their findings to the entire class, including proposed solutions.

Unit Three—Debating a Public Policy

Time Needed: 2–3 class periods
Materials Needed: Public Opinion Poll Handout

Procedure

1. Divide the class into the following special interest groups: students, parents, school board, police, civil rights groups, and local businesses. Have each group identify its interests in the curfew ordinance issue examined in the previous unit and the values each might promote. Hold a class debate in which each group shares its viewpoint with the class. Discuss why each of these groups of citizens might or might not be important in formulating public policy.

2. Distribute the "Public Opinion Poll" handout to each group of students. Have the groups conduct interviews of students, parents, teachers, school board members, local businesspeople, police officers, and other community agency workers. Have each group compile and present the result of its interviews.

3. Have students work in small groups to develop ideas to include in a policy recommendation to the city council. After each group presents its ideas to the class, the class should decide which ideas to include in a policy recommendation. The class should then make plans to present the recommendation to a public group or to the city council.

4. Invite the class to discuss why it is important for all citizens to participate in making public policy. Ask students what would happen if young people were not allowed to voice their opinions and proposed solutions in the curfew issue.

Unit Four—Student Forum

Time Needed: 3–5 class periods
Materials Needed: Student Forum Handout (2 copies of the ballot for each student)

Procedure

1. The Student Forum provides students with the opportunity to research and discuss legal issues that have historical roots and contemporary applications. The issue is a school district's proposal to introduce character education into the school curriculum. Using the forum format, students can see the public policy-making process in action.

Students are responsible for the organization of the forum. Your role will be to serve as a consultant to the students. Since the forum can take several days, depending on the number of characters chosen to play roles and the amount of discussion, you may elect to participate in the initial session as time permits. Direct students to the "Student Forum" handout.

2. After the initial review of the topic and the procedures, help students identify areas to research so that they can obtain background information to enhance the quality of their presentations and participation.

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A Proposed Curfew Ordinance

Background

The community is becoming increasingly concerned about the rise in juvenile crime reported in newspapers and on television. The police department recently published statistics illustrating that juvenile crime in the community is not only increasing but becoming more violent.

Juvenile crime statistics for the community mirror national trends. Nationally, juvenile nonviolent crime is decreasing, while the number of murders, robberies, rapes, kidnappings, and other violent acts committed by juveniles has risen dramatically.

Media attention to the problem has raised concerns among local residents who fear for their personal safety as well as that of young people. Some think the problem will get worse if something is not done—now.

More and more young people are using guns. If current trends continue, by the turn of the century, the chance of dying of a gunshot will surpass that of an auto accident.

Statistics show that homicide arrest rates for juveniles are increasing faster than for any other age group. People have thought that youth crime was mainly a problem of the inner city; however, youth in more privileged areas increasingly are committing violent crimes.

The statistics also show that juveniles are at greater risk of becoming victims of violent crimes. One out of three violent crimes committed against juveniles occurred on the street.

Proposal

In response to community concerns, the city council is considering enacting an ordinance that would impose a curfew on all young people under the age of 18. These are the key features of the proposed ordinance:

- All students would be required to be home by 10 P.M. Exemptions would be granted to students who work, attend a school-sponsored function, or are supervised by a parent.
- Students can be arrested for loitering, playing, strolling, or idling.
- All violators must be fingerprinted and photographed. Parents will be summoned to the police station to secure the release of their children.
- Repeat offenders can be fined and sent to a five-hour behavior-modification class.

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Learning More About the Policy

A. Identifying the Problem

1. What problem(s) will a curfew address?
2. How serious is the problem?
3. What are the causes of the problem?
4. What are the effects of the problem?
5. What, if anything, is currently being done to address the problem(s)?

B. Identifying Current Policy and Legal Issues Involved

1. What is the current curfew policy in your community?
2. What, aside from a curfew, is being done to address the problem(s) described above?
3. What state laws, if any, apply to community curfew ordinances?
4. What state or federal court decisions apply to community curfew ordinances?

C. Analyzing the Proposed Policy

1. What is the proposed curfew policy?
2. What benefits might result from the proposed policy?
3. What disadvantages might result from the proposed policy?
4. Who would be responsible for enforcing the proposed curfew?
5. What resources would be needed to enforce the curfew? Are these resources available?
6. Besides the proposed curfew, what other ways might there be to solve the problem?
7. Are there other communities in your state, or in the nation, where a similar curfew policy was adopted? What was the policy? What were the effects of the policy in the community?

D. Evaluating the Proposed Policy

1. What individual and/or community values and interests does the curfew issue involve?
2. What disagreements might exist in the community over the proposed policy? Who would support the policy? Who would oppose the policy?

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Public Opinion Poll

Step 1: Introduce yourself. Explain that you are conducting an interview to find out what community members think about a proposed curfew policy affecting the young people in your community. Ask the person whether he or she would be willing to respond to your questions.

Step 2: Request identifying information.

Person's Name: _____

Check one:

_____ student (elementary, middle school, high school)

_____ teacher (elementary, middle school, high school)

_____ principal (elementary, middle school, high school)

_____ parent (elementary, middle school, high school)

_____ local business
(name of business: _____)

_____ local government official
(name of agency: _____)

_____ other (identify: _____)

Step 3: Explain the problems that the curfew policy will address. Ask for responses to the following questions.

1. Do you think these problems are important? Why?
2. How serious are these problems?
3. Which of the following do you think is true?

   There is no rule or law for dealing with the problem.

   The rules for dealing with the problem are not adequate.

   The rules for dealing with the problem are adequate but are not being enforced.
4. Who should take responsibility for solving the problem? Why?

Step 4: Explain the proposed curfew policy and ask for responses to the following questions.

1. What do you think might be some advantages of the proposed policy?
2. What do you think might be some disadvantages of the proposed policy?
3. Would you favor adopting this policy? Why?
4. Are you familiar with communities in which curfews are in effect? If so, do you think the policy is effective?
5. What other things do you think could be done to address the problem?

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Student Forum

by Frank Kopecky

To the Teacher

This forum is a student-organized discussion of a legal issue. Your students are responsible for the forum. Your role is to provide copies of materials and to serve as a consultant.

Forum planning should not begin until students are familiar with the topic. You might select readings and complete the teaching strategies that will give students the background needed to participate in the forum.

The forum should take from two to five class periods, depending on the number of roles and amount of discussion. Independent research will elevate the quality of student presentations and overall scholarship. You, or your students, may elect to use all the sample roles, or you may revise or replace them. Make sure the roles represent many different philosophical viewpoints.

To the Student

This forum will give you an opportunity to take responsibility for your own learning. It is similar to a townhall meeting, where people come together to debate issues. The activity will help you explore other people's views and examine your own.

During this forum, you will consider whether a school district should adopt the proposal for character education presented in the following Background section. The school district conducts classes ranging from kindergarten through high school. As an alternative, you may consider whether your own school should adopt a character education program. What would such a program look like? What would be appropriate character education activities for each grade level? How would you go about convincing your school board to adopt or reject such a proposal?

How to Conduct a Forum

1. The class selects five students to serve on a forum panel.
2. All students complete the preforum ballot and submit it to the panel.
3. Students form groups to develop or adapt forum character roles.
4. The class identifies community members to invite to participate in the forum. Community members may represent themselves or their organizations, role-play sample roles suggested here, create new roles, act as student coaches, or assist students in any aspect of the forum. Include your teacher in making plans to invite guest speakers.
5. The panel selects a facilitator and clerk from among student volunteers. It also organizes the class's selection of students to role-play sample and created roles.
6. The clerk schedules the presentations of all roles.
7. The panel conducts the forum.
8. All students complete a postforum ballot. The panel reviews, compares, summarizes, and reports the results to the class.

Getting Ready

To prepare for this forum, review literature, including readings from your teacher, as well as other materials available from national, state, or local organizations that have positions on character education. Talk to people in your community who are knowledgeable about character education and education law, including people who deal with conflict resolution and moral development. Keep the forum focused on the legal aspects of the issue. Professionals who may be able to help you prepare for the forum, or who might participate in it in various roles, include teachers, principals, school board members, ministers, social workers, psychologists, lawyers and professors of law studies, professors of education, and paralegals.

Background

The local school board is concerned about the increase in crime and violence in the community and the general lack of moral education. It is also concerned about citizen apathy and lack of participation in elections and other civic activities. The board is debating whether to enact a character education program that will address these problems. Its proposal is to introduce appropriate character education activities into the curriculum at all grade levels. It anticipates that there will not be separate character education classes, but that teachers will introduce character education

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lessons at appropriate times in their classrooms. The school board is holding a public meeting to discuss the possibility of introducing character education into the school curriculum.

Introduction

Roles The following people have been asked to present their views to a mock school board meeting at which the character education proposal is being presented. They have been selected to testify because they have thoughtful but differing opinions about character education. Students playing the roles of these people should have five minutes to present their positions and to answer questions from the audience. Students in the audience may play the role of a school board. When questioned by the audience, the students should answer in a manner consistent with their roles.

Role 1: Beverly Worth

I am Beverly Worth, a high school social studies teacher. I think that character education is an essential component of a good curriculum in our constitutional society and that we should emphasize developing citizenship skills as well as knowledge in traditional subjects. Our community needs well-balanced persons who are able to communicate, understand one another, and share common values.

In a democracy, citizens must recognize that they have responsibilities as well as rights. The original American dream was built on the concept of civic virtue. The founders of this country recognized that it required citizens who respected individual freedom, yet were prepared to sacrifice for the common good.

The rule of law requires that we not only follow and respect the law but also participate in its development. We must participate in elections by voting and actively debating public issues. We must recognize that our views will not always be those of the majority, but we must honor the results of the majority-based decisions. Likewise, the majority must respect minority viewpoints. Teachers are well trained and are the perfect people to teach about core democratic values.

Schools are the perfect place to demonstrate and practice democratic skills. Communication skills such as developing positions, listening to others, and understanding other viewpoints can be taught in a variety of classroom settings. There is no need for extensive and costly curriculum revisions. We should develop a policy that requires incorporating character education into existing classes. History classes should study individuals who demonstrated good character. The themes of justice and fairness should be highlighted through literature. Value choices should be discussed in math and science. For example, how will the information superhighway affect learning, and how will we provide for equal access to computers?

Good teachers should always be on the alert for value issues that are related to their subjects and take the time to discuss them. Good teachers also must consider the maturity of the students. Different teaching strategies should be used with different age groups, and certain topics should not be introduced until the students are able to appreciate the value choices that are being discussed. We should adopt a policy of integrating character education into all classes.

Role 2: Chris Budowski

Hello, my name is Chris Budowski. I am a minister in this community. While I favor the adoption of character education, I think character education as contained in this proposal is just not enough. I am concerned that modern youth lack moral training. Drug use and teenage pregnancy are up. Crime and violence have skyrocketed. We need to take firm measures now to return this country to traditional values. Our schools need more courses in ethics and religion. I propose that there be a daily religious class for each grade in every school in the district. I recognize that the Bill of Rights prohibits the establishment of religion in publicly supported schools, but the original intent of the Constitution was not to keep religion totally out of the schools. The so-called wall of separation between church and state was not meant to be a barrier against religion. The founders were religious individuals who believed that people should learn to read and write so that they could read the Bible and become ethical and moral citizens. I think we have gone too far as a society in keeping religion out of the schools and that the current social problems are the result.

I am not advocating that the schools teach a particular religion. I realize that this country has a diverse population with many faiths, but I do think the schools can teach about religion, and they certainly have a responsibility not to be hostile toward religion. I think the best way to handle the teaching about religion would be to develop a course on religion and values that is consistent with the civic character our Constitution implies.

Perhaps guest speakers from various community religions could teach the course from time to time to assure balance. In addition, the school district could adopt a policy of releasing students for an hour each day to allow them to attend religious training at their own place of worship. Students who do not wish to participate could be offered different course material.

Role 3: Ethel Dunn

I am Ethel Dunn, a computer programmer and parent of three students in the schools. The problem with character education and teaching values is not that they are bad ideas in theory, but they are bad when put into practice. Who decides what values are important and should be taught in order to sustain our constitutional society?

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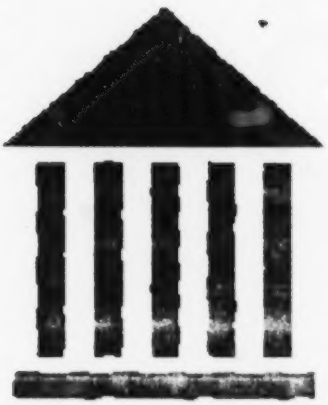

When public officials develop a list of "approved values," we eliminate tolerance of creativity and free expression.

Character education leaves too much room for introducing narrow political ideologies and religious beliefs into the classroom. I believe that important value-clarification skills can be learned. Students should be aware of their own values and recognize that in a pluralistic society, a society with various viewpoints, there is no single absolutely correct position. Teachers should help students learn to identify perspectives and analyze competing value choices. They should not be in the business of promoting certain values.

In my opinion, teaching religion in the schools, as the last speaker suggested, would violate the Bill of Rights and the concept of separation of church and state and make the realization of the American dream impossible. Religious education should be left to the families and religious organizations. We must adopt a policy that prohibits religious, value-based education in our schools.

Most teachers do not know enough about a religion other than their own to effectively teach about it. In attempting to teach about religion, they may offend members of the various denominations or give students inaccurate or biased information. We must remember that the purpose of the wall of separation is to keep the state away from religious matters as much as it is to keep religion out of the state's affairs. If the schools are to remain the place where all children may go to gain a common heritage, we must minimize religious teaching. Schools should be a place where topics are discussed and debated, but religion is just too sensitive a topic to debate in the public school setting. This school district must uphold the Bill of Rights. If we adopt a policy of teaching values, we risk losing public confidence in our schools. Some parents might even feel it necessary to sue the school district to protect their children from what they consider "religious" education. Children go to school to learn to think freely. We must continue to protect this fundamental freedom.

Role 4: Bernard Williamson

I am Bernard Williamson, a real estate developer and the father of two students in the schools. While I share some of the previous speaker's concerns about teaching religion in the schools, I disagree with her point about the schools' being value neutral.

We have to resist the tendency to believe that every idea or concept is equal. It has been said that "to tolerate everything is to value nothing." Good and evil exist in the world, and students should be taught the difference. There is too much cultural relativism and permissiveness in our society already.

Overall, I favor the idea of character education. I believe that there are many character traits that are essential to the American way of life and that we can all agree are important and should be encouraged in our students. Values such as honesty, hard work, responsibility, self-respect, and consideration of others can be taught. I think we should look for those values that have a broad consensus in our country and teach them in our schools.

There have been many books on values written in the last few years, from both liberal and conservative political perspectives. It is amazing how much overlap there is in the values that are selected. We would, of course, have to stay away from topics about which there is considerable controversy and no consensus, such as abortion and sex education. Also, I think we would have to be careful how we would teach religion. But there is a difference between teaching about religion and the teaching of religion. Our Constitution, Bill of Rights, and most of our laws reflect religious values. Students need to be aware of different religious traditions and develop an understanding of the values of other cultures.

Quite frankly, I wouldn't know anything about American religions other than my own if I had not learned about them in school.

Role 5: Junius Alexander

I am Junius Alexander, a high school student who will be graduating next year. I am worried about the quality of education I have been receiving. I have read reports saying that American schoolchildren score lower than students in many other countries and that there are graduates of our high schools who cannot read and

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write. After graduation they are unable to find jobs. Americans will never be able to sustain our constitutional dream with an illiterate public.

I think we need to forget about all these extra things like character education and return to good basic education. More time should be spent on literacy, math, and the sciences. As a nation, we are competing in the world market, and I want to be prepared to compete with people from other countries.

I am not against teaching values, but that is why we have families and religious organizations. Values are best taught at home and in churches. My parents and grandparents teach me about religion and ethics at home.

I would like to attend private school, but my parents can't afford the tuition. I think the government should give all families a voucher worth several thousand dollars that they could use in the manner they choose for the education of their children. Such a plan would maximize choice and put decision making about values squarely within the family, where it belongs. Families could choose to send their children to the public schools or to parochial, private, military, or Montessori schools. All schools would be competing for the parents' vouchers. This competition would be healthy. It would put free market discipline into the system. I feel I would get a better academic education if my parents could choose where I go to school.

Because the public schools have a monopoly on public funding, they have no incentive to improve. If the public schools knew that parents had a choice, we would really see some improvement in test scores in this country. Schools should help students understand what civic values are and how to fulfill the responsibilities of citizenship and to prepare us for future employment.

Role 6: Jeff Schecter

I am Jeff Schecter, a paralegal with a law firm in this city. I support character education in all public schools. American children need to develop core values and civic skills as well as basic knowledge. It does little good for people to know information if they cannot evaluate and communicate it to others.

I agree that with a little bit of effort, we can create a list of values that all would agree are essential and should be taught in our public schools. Empathy and self-discipline, for example, are basic values that should be taught. Everyone needs to be able to understand the position of others in our society and have the self-discipline to delay personal gratification. After all, education itself requires self-discipline. Learning takes time and is often difficult. The benefits and rewards are often not immediate. In a sense, we are banking knowledge and skills for future use.

Also, I don't think we should avoid controversial subjects, as long as character education is developed and taught in a grade-appropriate manner. Controversial topics can and should be discussed by mature students who can appreciate the difference between learning and indoctrination. This ability to discuss and decide is part of their preparation for responsible citizenship under our Constitution.

However, character education can be too simplistic. Most value choices are complex. I don't think you can teach values merely by having lectures about patriotism and stories about good people. Students will see the shallowness of this approach. Schools must teach values by example. Schools should be caring communities that respect the views of students and demonstrate concern for others by tutoring, working in homeless shelters, or volunteering in political campaigns.

The original dream of the founders in writing the Constitution was a nation based upon republican virtues. Individual virtue was important, but there also was a need to work together for the common good.

I think public schools have an important obligation to teach citizenship skills in a democratic republic such as ours and to instill democratic values in every student. Thomas Jefferson had a great deal of faith in education. Whenever questioned about his belief in democracy, he would argue that an informed citizenry is the best safeguard against tyranny. The public schools are the one place in society where all citizens have an equal opportunity to learn those values that we share as a people. Because it is so important to instill democratic values in a public school setting, I firmly oppose using public funds to subsidize private schools. Private schools have no obligation to teach uniform democratic values and contribute to the disintegration of a strong democracy. The public schools not only have the obligation to teach about values, but they also have the duty to do it well. Abraham Lincoln spoke about government of and by the people. Public schools have the responsibility to keep that dream alive.

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Should Character Education Be Part of the Public-School Curriculum?

Circle the choice that best answers how you feel about character education.

	strongly agree				strongly disagree
1. Overall, character education is a good idea and should be adopted in our schools.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Character education should be adopted even if it means that there will be less time for basic courses in writing, math, and science.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Character education can be integrated into already existing courses with little impact on the amount of time devoted to basic courses.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Religious values are an important aspect of character education.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Religious values are an important aspect of civic education.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Character education should be part of civic education.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Character education should be limited to character traits such as honesty, self-discipline, and responsibility that everyone agrees are important.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Controversial topics should be discussed as part of a character education program.	1	2	3	4	5
9. In discussing controversial topics, teachers should stress methods by which positions can be reached, but they should not take a position.	1	2	3	4	5
10. There is a consensus in American society that self-discipline, responsibility, compassion, courage, loyalty, and honesty should be taught.	1	2	3	4	5
11. There is a consensus in American society that faith, charity, work, justice, tolerance, and empathy should be taught.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Schools have an obligation to teach about religion without advancing any particular religious faith.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Religion is too sensitive a topic to discuss in public schools.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Released time should be provided to allow students to obtain religious and character education.	1	2	3	4	5
15. A voucher plan should be adopted to give families more choice in education.	1	2	3	4	5
16. It is important in a democracy to maintain strong public schools in which common values are taught.	1	2	3	4	5
17. We cannot sustain our constitutional society unless we teach values at school.	1	2	3	4	5
18. We cannot sustain our constitutional society if we teach specific values in public schools.	1	2	3	4	5

Write a short answer.

19. How would you define *character education*?
20. Having considered the issues in character education, I (agree/disagree) with the idea of including character education in our school district's curriculum because . . .
21. How would you include character education in the courses you are currently taking? What would such a program look like?
22. What would appropriate character-education activities be for each grade level? How would you convince your school board to adopt such a proposal?

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Activity Guide

OVERVIEW OF THE LESSON

Objectives

During the class sessions, students will—

- ✓ define public policy and describe how public policies are formed in a democratic society
- ✓ discuss how the public agenda is shaped by political leaders, special interest groups, the media, the courts, and individual citizens
- ✓ explain how citizens can monitor and influence the formation of public policy
- ✓ take and defend a position on a public policy issue arising from a local government

Lesson Summary

In Unit One, your lawyer introduces the concept of public policy and how it is decided. In Unit Two, students examine a case study of a curfew in Dallas, Texas. They then study a proposed community curfew policy. In Unit Three, students hold a debate on the curfew policy among various special interest groups, take a public opinion poll, and make a proposal on the issue. They are encouraged to take their proposals to a legislative body. Students then participate in a student forum that focuses on the debate over a school district's proposed policy on character education.

Following your lawyer's visits, you might ask students to draw editorial cartoons about the curfew issue or another issue or create diagrams that illustrate the relationship between citizens and policy making. You might also wish to have students present book reports explaining the role of public policy and policy making in those books. These extension activities are explained in more detail below. Share students' work with your lawyer, and make plans to include her or him as a participant in your civics instruction throughout the year.

PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT

As the units are completed, students may place their handouts, activity sheets, and research on the topics in their "Influencing Public Policy" portfolios. Encourage students to review their work and evaluate their understanding of public policy and policy making as they progress through the units.

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HOME CONNECTION

Since students will be taking home their Public Opinion Polls to canvass the opinions of family members, suggest that they try the following experiment: First, have students ask family members' opinions on the curfew issue. Then have them tell or read the information presented in class about the advantages and disadvantages of a curfew. Finally, have students poll family members again. Ask students to note whether the information influences family members' opinions.

ACTIVITY SHEET/ANSWER KEYS

In each Student Packet is an Activity Sheet. After your lawyer's visits, students may use the activity to strengthen vocabulary and concepts relating to public policy. The correct answers to the activity follow:

Word Puzzle

1. public
2. policy
3. citizen
4. government
5. democracy
6. society
7. community

Scrambled word: opinion

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Editorial Cartoons: Have pairs of students draw an editorial cartoon about the curfew issue or a current local or national issue. Point out that the cartoon should present the pair's opinion on the issue in a way that influences the reader; that is, the cartoon tries to convince the reader to accept the opinion. Encourage students to look at and study editorial cartoons in newspapers before drawing their own. Students who do not wish to draw might express their opinion on an issue in a letter to the editor of a newspaper instead.

Policy-Making Diagrams: Ask students to visualize and draw a diagram that illustrates the relationship between citizens and policy makers at different levels. For example, in a series of concentric circles, the citizen might be in the innermost circle with the next circle labeled *Local*, the next *State*, and the next *Federal*. Do not offer the example to students—encourage them to come up with their own representations first.

Policy Making in Books: Have students choose and read books from the bibliography on page 37 or books they have selected and then present reports to the class in which they explain how public policies, public issues, and/or policy making is featured in their books. Encourage students to present their reports using any props, audiovisuals, or other items they wish.

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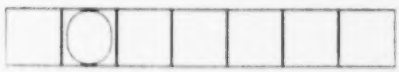
Word Puzzle

Many of the law- and government-related words used in this lesson have their roots in the Latin and Greek languages, usually because the concepts that the words name also have their roots in the cultures of ancient Rome and Greece.

In the appropriate boxes, write the word that each word history describes. Then unscramble the letters in the circles to spell the word that names something every person has about any issue or problem.

1. From Latin *publicus*, from *populus*, meaning "people"
2. From Greek *polis*, meaning "city, state"
3. From Latin *civis*, meaning "citizen"
4. From Latin *gubernare* + *-mentus*, from Greek *kubernan*, meaning "to direct, steer"
5. From Greek *demos*, meaning "common people" + *kratos*, meaning "strength, power"
6. From Latin *socius*, meaning "companion, ally, fellow"
7. From Latin *communis*, meaning "common"

1.
2.
3. 
4.
5.
6.
7.

Write the circled letters here: _____

Write the unscrambled word here: _____

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Bibliography

Level A

Cherry, Lynne. *The Great Kapok Tree: A Tale of the Amazon Rain Forest.* HBJ, 1991. Animals convince a man not to chop down their home, saving the great Kapok tree. Conservation theme about the interdependence of nature.

Coles, Robert. *The Story of Ruby Bridges.* Illustrated by George Ford. Scholastic, 1995. Civil rights issues that affect educational policies underlie this story of six-year-old Ruby Bridges, one of the first African-American children to attend an all-white school.

de Paola, Tomie. *The Art Lesson.* Putnam, 1990. Free to be creative at home and inhibited by the rules in his school art class, de Paola continues to develop his artistic talents when his teacher changes the art class policies.

———. *The Hunter and the Animals: A Wordless Picture Book.* Holiday House, 1981. Forest animals convince a hunter to break his gun.

Fritz, Jean. *Shh! We're Writing the Constitution.* Illustrated by Tomie de Paola. Putnam, 1987. A humorous look at the process of discussion and debate between leaders as they prepare to vote on constitutional proposals at the Constitutional Convention.

Maestro, Betsy. *Bats: Night Fliers.* Illustrated by Giulio Maestro. Scholastic, 1994. A fascinating look at the existence of bats on earth, concluding with a plea to save the dwindling bat population by dispelling myths about the animals and preserving the environment where they live.

Meddaugh, Susan. *Martha Calling.* Houghton, 1994. Should dogs be guests at an inn? Martha the speaking dog thinks so and argues her case convincingly before the guests at the inn where she wins a weekend visit.

Level B

Byars, Betsy. *After the Goat Man.* Viking Penguin, Inc., 1974. A young boy empathizes with an eccentric old man who tries to protect his home when forced to sell his property to make room for a new highway. Also appropriate for Level C.

Cherry, Lynne. *A River Ran Wild.* Illustrated by the author. Gulliver/HBJ, 1993. People who lived by a decaying river rallied to change regulations and laws that contributed to the pollution. Highlights the conflict between progress and the environment.

Cone, Molly. *Come Back Salmon.* Sierra Club, 1993. An inspirational look at one school's efforts to change a dying river back to a salmon spawning ground.

Darling, Kathy. *Manatee on Location.* Illustrated with photos by Tara Darling. Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1992. The author and her daughter dedicated this book to saving an important part of our heritage, the manatee, now a seriously endangered species.

Fireside, Harvey, and Sarah Betsy Fuller. *Brown v. Board of Education: Equal Schooling for All.* Enslow, 1994.

Haas, Carol. *Engel v. Vitale: Separation of Church and State.* Enslow, 1994.

Herda, D. J. *Furman v. Georgia: The Death Penalty Case.* Enslow, 1994.

Freedman, Russell. *Kids at Work: Lewis Hine and the Crusade Against Child Labor.* Photographs by Lewis Hine. Clarion, 1994. Compelling visual and narrative story of Hine's crusade to change child labor laws based on the abuses of the times.

Lauber, Patricia. *Summer of Fire: Yellowstone 1988.* Illustrated with photos. Orchard, 1992. The national park fire sparked controversy in Washington regarding fire-fighting policies.

Lazo, Caroline. *Elie Wiesel.* Dillon, 1994. Peacemakers series. Wiesel's experiences in Nazi concentration camps compelled him to dedicate his life to fighting oppression.

Bibliography prepared by Helene Senn and Diana Hess at the University of Washington, Seattle.

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Morin, Isobel V. *Women Who Reformed Politics*. Oliver, 1994. Profiles series. Spanning the history of our country, the stories of eight women, the issues each woman fought for, the problems each faced, and the influence each had.

Myers, Walter Dean. *Darnell Rock Reporting*. Delacorte, 1994. Darnell's involvement on the school newspaper exposes the city's problems with the homeless and involves students in the issue.

Pringle, Laurence. *Vanishing Ozone: Protecting Earth from Ultraviolet Radiation*. Morrow, 1995. Save-the-Earth series. A scientific and political look at the ozone layer, including reaction by elected officials and members of the chemical industry.

Riley, Gail Blasser. *Miranda v. Arizona: Rights of the Accused*. Enslow, 1994. Landmark Supreme Court Cases series. Readers are encouraged to rule on landmark cases after reading the background of each case, related Supreme Court decisions, and the arguments presented by both sides.

Ryden, Hope. *Backyard Rescue*. Illustrated by Ted Rand. Tambourine, 1994. Lindsay and Greta care for injured wild animals and fight to keep the animals in spite of prohibitive laws.

Stanley, Jerry. *I Am an American: A True Story of Japanese Internment*. Crown, 1994. An intense look at the events leading up to the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II.

Level C and Level D

Avi. *Nothing But the Truth. A Documentary Novel*. Orchard, 1991. A dispute between a high-school athlete and his English teacher over eligibility policies generates widespread debate among students, teachers, parents, and the community before the issues come before the school board.

Day, Nancy. *Animal Experimentation: Cruelty or Science?* Enslow, 1994. Issues in Focus series. A balanced look at the arguments for and against animal experimentation and the issues involved.

Dolan, Edward. *Your Privacy: Protecting It in a Nosy World*. Cobblehill, 1995. Focuses on the threats to our privacy by the advanced technology now available to governments, corporations, and institutions such as schools, and provides advice on how students can protect their privacy rights.

Gottfried, Ted. *Privacy: Individual Right v. Social Needs*. Millbrook, 1994. Issues and Debate series. The strength of the text is greatest when actual events and people are used to illustrate the debate over privacy issues such as patient confidentiality, drug testing, students' rights, and abuses of computer technology.

Guernsey, JoAnn Bren. *Sexual Harassment: A Question of Power*. Lerner, 1995. Frontline Series. A balanced discussion of the issues surrounding sexual harrassment from the viewpoints of men and women, liberals and conservatives, with a look at the impact of the Hill-Thomas case and the Tailhook scandal on policy.

Lowry, Lois. *The Giver*. Houghton Mifflin, 1994. Lowry develops a society in which poverty, inequality, and unemployment have been eliminated. What is the price of this type of society to its citizens? Readers debate the issues of living in such a world.

McCuen, Gary E. *Doctor Assisted Suicide and the Euthanasia Movement*. GEM, 1994. Ideas in Conflict series. An anthology of articles examining this controversial issue from ethical, social, political, religious, and economic perspectives.

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McKissack, Patricia, and Fredrick McKissack. *Sojourner Truth: Ain't I a Woman?* Illustrated with photographs. Scholastic, 1993. The true story of a former slave who from the pulpit and in the courts fought for her own freedom and that of her family in the "free" northern United States.

Patent, Dorothy Hinshaw. *The Vanishing Feast: How Dwindling Genetic Diversity Threatens the World's Food Supply.* Gulliver Green, 1994. Patent explores the connection between modern crop breeding, decreasing harvests, and declining animal diversity.

Salak, John. *The Los Angeles Riots: America's Cities in Crisis.* Illustrated with photographs. Millbrook, 1994. The book focuses on the riots that erupted following the King verdict and looks at the social crises that can provoke urban violence.

White, Ryan, and Ann Marie Cunningham. *Ryan White: My Own Story.* Illustrated with photographs. Dial, 1992. Ryan White describes his legal battle to return to school after contracting AIDS.

Curriculum Materials

Active Citizenship Today (ACT). Integrates the analysis of public policy and service learning. Student text and teacher's guide available for both middle and high school students. A collaborative project of the Constitutional Rights Foundation and the Close Up Foundation. Contact either of these organizations for information.

CityYouth. A seventh-grade multidisciplinary curriculum utilizing community studies, public policy analysis, and service learning. Contact the Constitutional Rights Foundation.

National Issues Forum (NIF). Publishes booklets on pressing national issues that encourage students to deliberate about a variety of policy alternatives. Contact National Issues Forum in the Classroom.

The Opposing Viewpoints Series uses a pro-con format to analyze contemporary and historical controversies. Contact Greenhaven Press, P.O. Box 289009, San Diego, CA 92198-9009.

The Public Issues Series, adapted from the Harvard Public Issues Project, focuses on persisting policy issues in American history. Contact the Social Science Education Consortium.

General Resources

The Horn Book Guide. Published twice a year. Provides an annotated list of the best children's books of the past six months, arranged by age level and genre.

No Kidding Around. Activism 2000 Project, Information USA Inc., P.O. Box E, Kensington, MD 20895. This handbook gives clear directions for how to move from information gathering to social action and change.

Teachers' Choices. Published once a year in the November issue of the *Journal of Reading.* An annotated list, by age level, of the 30 best new children's and young adult books that have been selected by teachers across the nation.

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Organizations

The following organizations publish materials on the legal and political systems, many dealing with public policy and policy making. Contact them directly for a materials catalog.

Center for Civic Education
5416 Douglas Fir Road
Calabasas, CA 91302

Close Up Foundation
Publishing, Dept C26
44 Canal Plaza
Alexandria, VA 22314-1592

Constitutional Rights Foundation
601 South Kingsley Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90005

National Institute for Citizen Education in the Law
711 G Street, SE
Washington, DC 20003

National Issues Forum in the Classroom
100 Commons Road
Dayton, OH 45459-2777

Social Science Education Consortium
P.O. Box 21270
Boulder, CO 80308-4270

World Wide Web Sites

CIVNET is the most comprehensive website available to civic educators. Developed by the American Federation of Teachers.
http://www.civnet.org

E-Mail to Congress. Send an e-mail message to a member of Congress.
http://www.primenet.com/solutions/congress/democracy.htm

ERIC/ChESS is the largest U.S. clearinghouse of social studies and social science educational materials.
http://www.indiana.edu/~ssdc/eric-chess.html

Kids Voting
http://www.webcom.com/~iol/kidsvoting/welcome.html

National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS)
http://www.ncss.org/online

Political Scientist's Guide to the Internet
http://www.trincoll.edu/pols/home/html

Project Vote Smart: find out how members of Congress voted, etc.
http://www.peak.org:80/vote-smart

Thomas: Legislative information on the Internet
http://thomas.loc.gov

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Lawyer's Evaluation Form

Your name _____

Teacher/school _____ Grade/class _____

School Address _____

Participation

Did the program s organization and information make it easy for you to participate? ☐ yes ☐ no

Problems _____

Topics and Class Sessions

Topics covered _____

How were the topics chosen? _____

_____

Materials

Was the booklet we furnished useful? _____

If not, what should have been included/changed? _____

_____

The teacher and I discussed our plans in advance. ☐ yes ☐ no

We didn't because _____

_____

The students were prepared. ☐ yes ☐ no

Comments? _____

_____

The session went about as I thought it would. ☐ yes ☐ no

The unexpected was _____

_____

I'm going to do something more with this teacher and class. ☐ yes ☐ no

If yes, what? _____

_____

Summary

On the whole, the experience was _____

_____

Other comments? _____

_____

_____

Please send this form to

May Nash
American Bar Association/YLEFC
541 N. Fairbanks Court 15th Floor
Chicago, IL 60611-3314

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Law-Related Education Essentials Matrix

From *Essentials of Law-Related Education*. ©1995 American Bar Association

SECTION	A	B	C	D
SUBJECT MATTER				
Law				
How laws are made, enforced, and interpreted	X	X	X	X
Power				
How power is structured and how it functions in societies	X	X	X	X
How governments are established (purpose, authority, and limits)	X	X	X	X
How U.S. and other constitutional systems legitimate power in societies			X	X
Liberty				
Fundamental constitutional rights				
. . . freedom of speech			X	X
. . . right to assemble peaceably			X	X
. . . right to petition the government			X	X
CONTEXTS AND PRACTICES OF INSTRUCTION				
Conditions Necessary for Effective LRE Instruction				
Access to, and use of, exemplary instructional materials	X	X	X	X
Student-centered classroom	X	X	X	X
Problem-oriented approach to instruction	X	X	X	X
Provision of learning opportunities beyond the classroom	X	X	X	X
Parental involvement in school	X	X	X	X
Developmentally appropriate instruction	X	X	X	X
Instructional Strategies				
Instruct interactively				
. . . use cooperative learning strategies, simulations, and role-plays	X	X	X	X
. . . use experiential learning strategies	X	X	X	X
Develop curriculum				
. . . balanced/relevant	X	X	X	X
. . . deliberate in consideration of controversial issues	X	X	X	X
. . . designed to examine public policy issues and help students make informed decisions about possible outcomes and weigh the consequences of these outcomes	X	X	X	X
Assessment				
Assesses students' values, interests, experiences, and knowledge prior to, and after, instruction (pre- and post-assessment)	X	X	X	X
Provides opportunities to apply what has been learned	X	X	X	X
SKILLS				
Research				
Conducting personal interviews or engaging in field research about legal issues			X	X
Organizing information	X	X	X	X
Thinking				
Analyzing and interpreting judicial opinions and other legal documents or issues			X	X
Making informed decisions and judgments about situations involving the law and legal issues	X	X	X	X
Communications and Social Participation				
Articulating and expressing ideas, beliefs, and opinions regarding legal issues		X	X	X
Persuading others regarding beliefs and actions related to the law		X	X	X
Working cooperatively with others to make decisions and take actions concerning hypothetical or actual legal or law-related social issues	X	X	X	X
ATTITUDES, BELIEFS, AND VALUES				
Substantive				
Cultivating a commitment to constitutional democracy			X	X
Valuing informed, active, and responsible participation in civic life	X	X	X	X
Appreciating the value of legitimately resolving conflicts and differences in society		X	X	X
Procedural				
Understanding how law reflects and shapes collective values, beliefs, and dispositions	X	X	X	X
Understanding how collective values, beliefs, and dispositions reflect and shape law	X	X	X	X
Understanding how attitudes, values, and beliefs essential to LRE are fostered through teaching of fundamental subject matter employing critical instructional practices	X	X	X	X

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Please Share Your Success!

The American Bar Association hopes that attorneys and schools participating in the **I'm the People—It's About Citizenship and You** program have great success using this booklet. And we want to hear about that success and share it with our members. So please submit descriptions, materials, and photos from your most memorable activities and special events to:

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It's About Citizenship and You
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Division for Public Education
541 North Fairbanks Court
Chicago, IL 60611-3314
http://www.abanet.org/publiced/home.html
312/988-5735

I'm the People—It's About Citizenship and You.

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Making Rules and Laws
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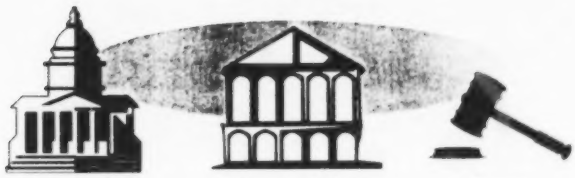
Resolving Conflicts
- features conflict resolution techniques

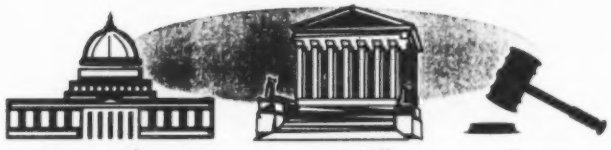
Serving the Community
- gives ways to solve community problems through public service

Lawyers Helping Young People Become Good Citizens

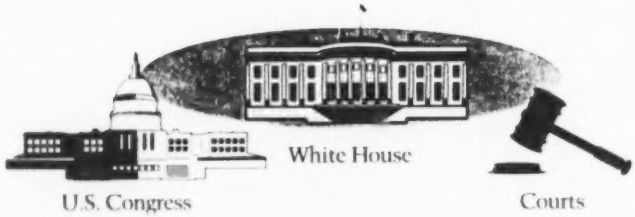
INFLUENCING PUBLIC POLICY



City Council Mayor's Office Courts



State Legislature Governor's Office Courts



U.S. Congress White House Courts

Public policy is not made in a vacuum. There are many influences that can determine how public policy is formed.

All persons, whether eligible to vote or not, have the right to make their views known to their elected representatives and other government officials. We all, therefore, have the ability to try to shape public policy.

The media, primarily newspapers and television, and special interest groups, such as labor unions and business associations, focus both the public's and the lawmakers' attention on specific issues, thereby putting pressure on the lawmakers at all levels to adopt desired polices.

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